TO Business

Toronto Economic Development speaking with the business community

August 2009

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Delivering on the Agenda for Prosperity

Since the January 2008 release of the Agenda for Prosperity—an action plan to stimulate economic competitiveness and growth—many initiatives have been undertaken to implement its strategic directions.

These initiatives centre around four pillars that provide the framework for the Agenda:

- Proactive Toronto: Business Climate
- Global Toronto: Internationalization
- Creative Toronto: Productivity and Growth
- One Toronto: Economic Opportunity and Inclusion

Following is an overview of recent initiatives supporting the Agenda for Prosperity:

1. Proactive Toronto: Business Climate

Improve the business climate within the city to enable, accelerate and attract economic growth.

• Freeze on development charges

City Council has adopted a structure for development charges that freezes the fee at current levels for the next two years (until January 31, 2011).

For background information on the City of Toronto's development charge by-law click here.

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• Gold Star Service for strategic developments

Toronto's Gold Star program helps businesses reduce the time and costs incurred when working on development projects. An enhanced case management approach is now in place for strategic industrial and office developments.

Effective immediately, project managers for all industrial, commercial office and institutional projects will receive Gold Star Service. Each project is assigned to a City of Toronto District Review Team led by a Planning Director and an Economic Development Officer who will work proactively with the project manager and other City departments to identify approval requirements, help resolve issues, and ensure that the client receives prompt attention.

For more information on Toronto's Gold Star Service, contact gspezza@toronto.ca.

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• New Senior Business Development Officers appointed

The City of Toronto's Economic Development professionals guide businesses through the municipal development process, provide business-to-business connections, help resolve municipal issues, advocate on behalf of business on City-wide policy issues that impact the business community, and expedite decisions and provide site location information.

Helping to provide these various business services are three new Senior Business Development Officers.

Catherine Cieply joined the Economic Development & Culture (EDCT) Division's Business Services section from her former position as a Senior Planner, and works out of the North York Civic Centre office.

John Alderdice was previously an Economic Development Officer who worked at Toronto's North, South and most recently East district field offices. He was very involved in the project management and implementation of the Green Sector Development Strategy. John now works out of the West office.

Neil Farmer was an Economic Development Officer in Toronto's East district field office in Scarborough for the past 11 years. He managed several projects such as the Signature Sites brochure and worked on numerous investment applications such as Viva Magnetics, Sealy Canada and ProLogis. Neil continues to work out of the East office.

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• Development Application Status website launched

The City of Toronto has launched a new Development Application Status website as part of its commitment to continually improve the planning process. The website allows

visitors to obtain detailed, current information on active development projects and planning applications dating back to January 1, 2006.

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• Entrepreneurs enter the Dragons' Den at City Hall

Over 240 local entrepreneurs went "Inside the Dragons' Den" at Toronto City Hall to learn how to turn their business ideas into money-making ventures.

The event was hosted by Enterprise Toronto and CBC Television. Special guests were welcomed by Dianne Buckner, host of Dragons' Den, and Robert Herjavec, a successful entrepreneur and "angel investor."

Buckner and Herjavec shared the dos and don'ts of pitching business ideas to investors. Experts were on hand to provide entrepreneurs with specific information on business valuation, business planning, market sizing, and pitching techniques for their own businesses. Attendees also had an opportunity to apply to audition for season four of CBC Television's Dragons' Den.

Enterprise Toronto provides services and programs for Toronto entrepreneurs and small businesses, including business plan consultations, free seminars, business name registration and BizPaL online permit and licence service. Enterprise Toronto is part of the Business Services section within the City of Toronto's Economic Development, Culture and Tourism division.

For more information on Enterprise Toronto visit www.enterprisetoronto.com.

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• Social networking sites: Do they work for you?

The City is investigating social networking tools and would like to hear from you.

Your input on the extent to which you use social networking sites for business purposes would be helpful in determining if this medium would be a useful addition to the City's business communications channels. Social networking sites might provide individuals another contact point to interact with the City as well as to connect with other business owners and build their resource network.

Please email bfrench@toronto.ca and tell us which networking sites you currently use for business purposes (e.g., sites used for networking, research and employment purposes).

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2. Global Toronto: Internationalization

Diversify Toronto's international portfolio by substantially increasing economic activity with cities beyond North America with a focus on emerging markets.

• Michael Bryant appointed Invest Toronto CEO

Michael Bryant has been appointed Chief Executive Officer of Invest Toronto.

"Michael Bryant is exactly the person Invest Toronto needs in this important leadership role at this time of challenge and opportunity," Mayor David Miller said of Ontario's former economic development minister and MPP for St. Paul's, Toronto.

"Michael has incredible qualifications and a longstanding record of dedication to the residents of Toronto," the Mayor added. "He will be a tremendous asset in advancing our City's position in the global economy while attracting investment and high quality jobs."

Invest Toronto was created in response to recommendations in both the Blueprint for Fiscal Stability and Economic Prosperity and the Agenda for Prosperity.

The new agency will engage the private sector in promoting Toronto as an opportunity for investment through marketing and trade missions, and by coordinating activities with other governments and business.

"It's a huge honour to receive this appointment from Invest Toronto's board of directors and its chair, my mayor, David Miller," Bryant said. "I am ready for this exciting opportunity to lead Invest Toronto and to help steer Toronto's economy through the current recession in order to increase the City's economic competitiveness and ensure its future prosperity."

Bryant assumed his new responsibilities in early June. Click here for a full biography.

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• Build Toronto and Invest Toronto boards of directors announced

Toronto City Council has appointed the new boards of directors for Build Toronto and Invest Toronto.

Build Toronto was established to engage private and public sector partners in the development of underutilized City real estate to unlock the value of the properties, stimulate job creation in key sectors, and regenerate Toronto's neighbourhoods. For a full list of Build Toronto board members click here.

The mission of Invest Toronto is to promote Toronto as a destination for businesses to invest, grow and prosper. Invest Toronto will engage the private sector in promoting Toronto as a business destination. The new agency will promote Toronto through organizing investment and trade missions, hosting inbound investment delegations, targeting sectors and companies for potential expansion into Toronto, and working with key stakeholders and government partners. For a full list of Invest Toronto board members click here.

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• Build Toronto appoints executive team

The Board of Directors for Build Toronto has announced two members of its senior executive management team.

Canadian development executive Lorne Braithwaite has been named Chief Executive Officer. Braithwaite began his career with Oxford Development Group as a project manager, eventually rising to Senior Vice President for development across Canada. Braithwaite was Chairman and CEO of Ethan Allen Canada for 24 years and since 2002 has provided consulting services to Ivanhoe Cambridge.

Joining Braithwaite will be Build Toronto's Chief Operating Officer Derek Ballantyne. Ballantyne was CEO of Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Canada's largest landlord with a staff of more than 1,500 people managing some 58,500 units of social and market housing valued at over $6 billion.

For more information, visit Build Toronto.

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3. Creative Toronto: Productivity and Growth

Anchor and expand strategic industry sectors through increased competition and collaboration.

• International gaming company comes to Toronto

Paris-based Ubisoft has announced its plans to open a Toronto studio. The company will invest more than $500 million and hire upwards of 800 people.

"The city is one of North America's economic and cultural epicentres and our expectations are high," said Yves Guillemot, President and Chief Executive Officer at Ubisoft. "We're excited to be able to count on the exceptional local talent, who will contribute to our accelerated growth and will have a profound impact on the video game industry with the excellence of their creativity."

The Toronto location will be the fourth Ubisoft studio in Canada, joining facilities in Montreal, Quebec City and Vancouver. Ubisoft said the new studio will begin operations later this year.

Ubisoft is one of the largest publishers of video games in the world. Its list of titles includes best sellers Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell, Assassin's Creed and Prince of Persia.

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• Eco-roof Incentive Program launched

The City of Toronto is offering financial incentives for green roof and cool roof construction on industrial, commercial and institutional buildings. The Eco-roof Incentive Program is offering $50 per square metre of green roof construction up to $100,000, and $2 to $5 per square metre of cool roof construction up to $50,000.

An "eco-roof" refers both to green roofs that support vegetation as well as cool roofs that reflect the sun's thermal energy, according to the program's performance criteria. Eco-roofs can assist with storm-water management, reduce urban heat and summer cooling demands and beautify buildings through increased biodiversity.

The eco-roof program builds on Toronto's successful green roof pilot program and green development strategy.The fall program application deadline is September 11, 2009 with committee decisions to be made by September 25, 2009.

For full program details and to download an application, click here.

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• Transit system gets its first green roof

An 835-square metre garden now adorns the roof of the Eglinton West Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) station, offering a more pastoral view at the Eglinton end of the Allen Expressway.

The green roof, the first of many planned for the transit system, will reduce storm water runoff, improve air quality and protect the roof from weathering.

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• Toronto scientists score stem cell coup

Toronto scientists have made another breakthrough in stem cell research. Andras Nagy and his team of scientists at Mount Sinai Hospital discovered a safer way to make human cells act like embryonic stem cells—a first in the world.

The discovery overcomes one of the major hurdles in the search for new drugs, finding innovative cures for disease and creating personalized organs and tissue for patients. Experts say the discovery will quickly be adopted by labs around the world and will accelerate further advances in stem cell research.

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• New development for historic Guild Inn

Centennial College plans to construct its Cultural and Heritage Institute at the Guild Inn site in Scarborough. The multi-use development will include a new hotel and conference centre complex as well as restorations to the historic Bickford Residence.

The college will seek a private hotel developer/operator to invest about $40 million in this project. The City of Toronto will make a $4.2 million investment in the park. The redevelopment involves a combination of new construction, restoration and site improvements respecting the history and footprint of the existing site.

The City of Toronto will sign a letter of intent with Centennial College for a long-term sublease with a not-for-profit corporation that will be incorporated and controlled by the college. The City currently leases the property from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

The college intends to restore the historic Bickford Residence, a portion of which will house the research and learning resources of its Culture and Heritage Institute. The completed project is expected to be commercially viable while providing training opportunities for senior students from the School of Hospitality and Tourism and related college programs. The project is expected to be completed within four years.

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• Toronto architect wins GG Award

Toronto architect Raymond Moriyama is one of nine recipients of the 2009 Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts.

Moriyama designed some of Canada's most notable buildings, including the Canadian War Museum (Ottawa), the Bata Shoe Museum (Toronto), and Science North (Sudbury). He is known for buildings that balance harmoniously with the landscape and encourage civic engagement.

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• Lower Don Lands selected for Clinton climate program

Waterfront Toronto's Lower Don Lands development is one of 16 founding projects to receive funding under the William J. Clinton Foundation's Climate Positive Development Program. The program supports the development of large-scale urban projects that demonstrate cities can grow in ways that are "climate positive." Climate positive real estate developments strive to reduce the amount of on-site CO_2 emissions

to below zero.

When the initial 16 projects are completed, nearly one million people will live and work in Climate Positive communities. These communities will be located in Melbourne, Australia; Palhoca, Brazil; Toronto, Canada; Victoria, Canada; Ahmedabad, India; Jaipur, India; outside Panama City, Panama; Pretoria, South Africa; Johannesburg, South Africa; Seoul, South Korea; Stockholm, Sweden; London, UK; San Francisco, USA and Destiny Florida, USA.

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• Toronto company wins "green" awards

Teknion Corporation, headquartered in Toronto, has been recognized by the US government's General Services Administration with its first Evergreen Award in the Furniture category. Teknion is an international designer, manufacturer and marketer of office systems furniture and related storage and seating products.

"We are very honoured to win an Evergreen Award as it reinforces Teknion's commitment to the environment and our clients, " said Tracy Backus, Teknion's National Manager of Sustainable Programs.

As well, Teknion's Synapse contemporary wooden side chair was honoured with a Bloom Award for its strong, sustainable design. Synapse finished first in the Furniture category in the annual award sponsored by Interiors & Sources magazine in partnership with the American Society of Interior Designers.

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4. One Toronto: Economic Opportunity and Inclusion

Enhance and expand Toronto's labour force and ensure that all residents have equitable access to the benefits of Toronto's enhanced economic competitiveness and growth.

• Investing in aspiring fashion entrpreneurs

Toronto youth with a flair for fashion are being given a chance to hone their business skills through the Youth Entrepreneurship Partnerships (YEP) program.

The program is a joint initiative between the Toronto Fashion Incubator, which receives funding from the City of Toronto, and Youth Employment Services, a non-profit organization providing employment counselling, training and job placement services for youth who are at-risk and disadvantaged.

"This project will demystify the world of running your own business for youth who otherwise may never have the chance to see how to build a career by combining their creativity with entrepreneurship," said Harinder Takhar, Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services.

For further details, please visit the Toronto Fashion Incubator website.

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• Legacy projects for Pan Am Games bid

Toronto City Council has invested $49.5 million to create an infrastructure of new and revitalized athletic facilities that will benefit priority neighbourhoods and leave a legacy

for Toronto.

The City's investment, tied to the Toronto area's bid to host the 2015 Pan American/ParaPan Games, is expected to leverage about $198 million from the provincial and federal governments to complete the necessary work at six City-owned athletic sites.

The City of Toronto will partner with the University of Toronto Scarborough and the governments of Ontario and Canada to build a new competitive aquatic facility and field house that will lead to the creation of the first Canadian Sport Institute. This site will be the proposed location of most of the aquatic competitions.

The Toronto 2015 Bid is led by the province through BIDCO and involves 16 municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area.

The Pan American Sports Organization's five-member Evaluation Commission will be in Toronto August 30 and 31 to meet with the Toronto 2015 Bid team and visit proposed Games venues and facilities.

The Toronto region's bid is competing with bids by Lima, Peru and Bogota, Colombia to host the 2015 games. The 42 member nations will vote to award the hosting responsibilities in November 2009.

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5. Calendar

Upcoming Enterprise Toronto Events and Seminars

The events listed below are a highlight of the many events hosted by Enterprise Toronto. For a full listing of events please visit the website.

Introduction to E-business for SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises)
September 8, 2009
6 to 9 p.m.
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West
Committee Room #2

E-business is the use of Internet technology to facilitate doing business. Small businesses new to the world of e-business will find information and tools to help them get started. Topics to be explored include: What is e-business?, assessing the relevancy and readiness for your business, advantages of investing in e-business, highlighting some legal considerations...and much more.

E-business: Getting Started
September 10, 2009
6 to 9 p.m.
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West
Committee Room #2

The Web is an interactive tool for finding market research. You can search the Web for information about products and services, suppliers, competitors and marketing ideas. This session will provide small business owners knowledge on how to use the Web to find valuable business information, use open source software, protect and safeguard your business, and what to look for when selecting an e-business service provider.

E-business: Operating Your Business Online
September 14, 2009

6 to 9 p.m.
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West
Committee Room #2

Websites can range from very simple information-based sites to more complex e-commerce websites that are well integrated with your business. Before you establish a website, take a minute to understand the different purposes they serve. This session will guide you in creating a web presence, purchasing and selling online, and e-exporting your business activity.

E-business: Marketing Series I
September 16, 2009
6 to 9 p.m.
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West
Committee Room #2

Internet marketing refers to strategies to promote your business online, and is an important part of any marketing strategy. This session will focus on using online advertising techniques, traditional low cost marketing, promotional messages, display advertising, and how to use search engine optimization for your products or services.

E-business: Marketing Series II
September 28, 2009
6 to 9 p.m.
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West
Committee Room #2

Social media marketing uses social media sites to raise your business's visibility on the Internet and promote its products and services. These sites are useful to build business networks for exchanging ideas and knowledge. This session will introduce your business to tools such as blogs, podcasts, online videos, message boards and internet auctions and virtual malls.

E-business and Your Current System
October 1, 2009
6 to 9 p.m.
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West
Committee Room #2

Designed to inform business owners of advanced technologies that make everyday business operations more efficient. You will learn what Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is and how it works. You will also learn how to integrate back office processes for e-commerce and how customer relationship management can help your business.

How to Start a Food Business Seminar
September 21 & December 14, 2009
North York Civic Centre, 5100 Yonge Street

If you are a chef or "foodie" these workshops are for you! The seminar will address:
- How to develop your products
- How to develop your business plan
- How to make sure your financing is in place
- How to brand your identity
- How to utilize the Web to source information

Hosted by The Toronto Food Business Incubator and delivered in partnership with the City of Toronto's Economic Development & Culture division.

Admission is free but pre-registration is required. For more information visit the website

Small Business Forum 2009: Turning Challenges into Opportunities
October 19, 2009
Metro Toronto Convention Centre

Please visit the Enterprise Toronto website for details as they become available.

Upcoming Toronto Conferences

CitiesAlive! 2009 World International Green Roof Infrastructure Congress
October 19 - 22, 200
Allstream Centre
Exhibition Place
www.citiesalive.org

Building on the theme "Green Roof Infrastructure – A Global Solution to Climate Change," the Congress will showcase international world-class green roof and wall infrastructure designs and case studies; building, neighbourhood and watershed scale research; and innovative policies and programs that support the creation of green urban spaces.

SIOR (Society of Industrial and Office Realtors) Fall World Conference
October 29 - 31, 2009
The Fairmont Royal York
www.siordata.com

SIOR is a leading professional commercial and industrial real estate association. With more than 3,200 members in 590 cities in 25 countries, SIOR represents today's most knowledgeable, experienced, and successful commercial real estate brokerage specialists. The conference will provide the opportunity for attendees to increase their professional success and enhance their business networks.

6. Contact us

Contact us at cknipfel@toronto.ca with ideas for future newsletter topics, questions about issues raised, or to add names to our distribution list.

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7. Here to help

If you are looking to expand or relocate, or need assistance with city, provincial or federal agencies, contact investing@toronto.ca. We are able to put you in touch with key contacts to expedite your business plans.

Learn more about Toronto's comprehensive business services.

See past issues of TO business.

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